

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

The rejection of claims 1-6, 8-9, 11-14, 16-17, and 19-22 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being made "obvious" based on Brown '551 in view of Kuruvila '315 is respectfully traversed.

To expedite further prosecution of this application, the claims have now been replaced by a new set of claims 23-42 which are hoped to better define the claimed invention.

In particular, the new claims clarify the definition and role of each of the data objects, which will hopefully assist in distinguishing the claims over the art. A terminal has a data object in memory which is duplicated to a plurality of network-connected terminals, such that there exists over the network a set of duplicated data objects. For this set, one of the data objects is established as a master data object. In such a system, the terminal maintaining the master objects may be unable to fulfil its role for a variety of reasons, for example because its processing power or memory is overused, because its network connection is unreliable, or because it has been switched off.

This problem is solved in the present invention because, when the terminal that maintains the master data object becomes unavailable, which of the other data objects in the set should be master data object is determined and this data object is established as the new master data object.

The present invention describes duplicated objects, *i.e.* a set of identically structured objects, each stored on a networked terminal. The data in the objects is periodically updated. This type of system allows a plurality of computers to interact within a network without a central server and is particularly used in gaming environments where each player needs to accurately

know the location, heading and state of all the other players. One data object in the set is designated as the master data object to maintain consistency between the objects in the set.

Neither Brown nor Kuruvila discloses such a system. The server-central system of Brown discloses a word-processing program module that creates a multi-user control file when a document is accessed. Copies of the control file are kept on networked computers and if the control file is lost for any reason it may be reconstructed from these copies. A copy may not become the master control file. Thus Brown does not disclose, as required by the new independent claims, that when a terminal maintaining a master data object becomes unavailable, another data object is established as master. If the server is unavailable the control file is unavailable.

Kuruvila discusses a distributed data object system in which modules of an application run on different nodes within the network (column 5, lines 42-48), and thus does not describe a server-central system. Each module may have a spare stored at another node that may be brought online to replace the module if it fails. These spare components are generally unused and thus are spares in the normal use of the word, not duplicated objects. Kuruvila does not disclose, as required by the new independent claims, that a data object is duplicated to each of the other network-connected terminals. There would be no reason to do this in Kuruvila because a distributed system is still a single system, albeit one distributed amongst many computers. Nor does Kuruvila disclose, as required by the new independent claims, determining which of the data objects in the set should be the new master data object, since in Kuruvila a single spare is brought online.

Thus the new independent claims are novel and not obvious vis a vis Brown and/or Kuruvila. Neither discloses duplicated objects and so there would be no incentive for an

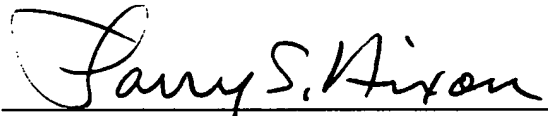
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ordinarily skilled person to consider either as a solution to the problem of terminals hosting master data objects becoming overworked.

Accordingly, this entire application is now believed to be in allowable condition and a formal Notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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